



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Finger Lakes National Forest  
Hector Ranger District

[www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl)

5218 State Route 414  
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File Code: 1950

Date: January 16, 2015

## **Invitation to Comment – Please Reply by February 17, 2015 Finger Lakes National Forest Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Suppression Project**

Dear Interested Parties:

The USDA Forest Service is initiating an environmental analysis process for the proposed Finger Lakes National Forest Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Suppression Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). I am writing to seek your comments for the project proposal that consists of utilizing biological and chemical control to suppress the Hemlock Wooly Adelgid (HWA), an invasive pest that feeds on and kills Eastern hemlock trees, and can cause widespread Hemlock mortality. The proposed action is to allow for biological and chemical control of the HWA on 2,971 acres of Finger Lakes National Forest land in the following watersheds: Mill Creek, Breakneck Creek, Curry Creek, Sawmill Creek, Ravine Creek, Hector Falls Creek, McBride Creek, Potomac Creek, Hencoop Creek, Spring Brook (see the enclosed project information and map for specifics).

The Finger Lakes National Forest (FLNF) has approximately 2,971 acres of prime Eastern hemlock habitat in gorges and ravines, as well as in upland northern hardwood forests. Eastern hemlock plays a vital role in providing healthy and diverse ecosystems and unique recreation opportunities. The HWA threatens widespread mortality of Eastern hemlock on the FLNF as well as on adjacent state and private land. Tree health declines with initial infestation and mortality is seen in 5-7 years in the Finger Lakes region. Suppression of the HWA is proposed to maintain Eastern hemlock on the FLNF landscape, and to sustain the role Eastern hemlock plays in providing wildlife habitat, diverse botanical and ecological resources, soil retention, water quality, fisheries habitat, and recreational experiences. This project is being developed through a collaborative process that was initiated with a January 7, 2015 public open house meeting. A second public open house and field tour is scheduled for Saturday, January 31, 2015 (details below).

This proposed action potentially falls in a category of actions excluded from analysis in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, as proposals of this type individually and cumulatively do not have a significant effect on the human environment. This proposal appears to fall under Section 603 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) (16 U.S.C.6591b). Section 603 establishes a categorical exclusion for qualifying insect and disease projects in designated areas on National Forest System lands. An insect and disease project that may be categorically excluded under this authority is a project that is designed to reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, insect or disease infestation in the areas (HFRA, Sections 602(d) and 603(a)).

I am interested to hear any concerns, issues or suggestions you may have regarding the proposed action. Please provide your comments to us by February 17, 2015

In your comments, please include the following information:

1. Your name, address and telephone number or email address.



2. The project you are commenting on: FLNF Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Suppression.
3. Site specific comments about the proposal along with supporting information and rationale you believe will help identify issues that need to be addressed.
4. Concerns about environmental effects associated with the proposal.

Postal, hand-delivered, oral, electronic and facsimile (FAX) comments on the proposal will be accepted. Postal comments must be submitted to me in c/o: Tim Noon, Hector Ranger District, 5218 St Rt 414, Hector, NY, 14841. Hand-delivered comments must be submitted to Hector Ranger District, 5218 St Rt 414, Hector, NY, 14841. Oral comments may be submitted by phone to (607) 546-4470 ext. 316, or in person at the Hector Ranger District office. The office hours for those submitting oral or hand-delivered comments are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments may also be submitted to me by FAX to (607) 546-4474, ATTN: Tim Noon.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf), Word (.doc or .docx) or Portable Document Format (.pdf), to comments-eastern-green-mt-finger-lakes-finger-lakes@fs.fed.us. Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments.

Comments may also be taken in person at the FLNF HWA Suppression open house and field tour scheduled for Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. at the Hector Ranger District office, 5218 State Route 414, Hector NY, 14841. A field tour of project sites will depart the office at 10:30a.m. and conclude at 12:00.

Please contact Tim Noon (contact information above) if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the FLNF HWA Suppression project. Thank you for your interest in the Finger Lakes National Forest.

*/s/ Jodie L. Vanselow*

Jodie L. Vanselow  
District Ranger  
Finger Lakes National Forests

Enclosures: Project information and map